The Voice of Bellmore - Merrick

Saint John's Lutheran Church & School

"St. John's Early Childhood Center"

APRIL ~ 2026

Dear Friends in Christ!

Spring has sprung for certain, although there are those days in the month that make you wonder how long is winter still going to try and stick around… warm one moment and cold the next… yet no matter the actual weather… spring has sprung and we are in full Easter mode! – for truly we can sing aloud with the angels… Halleluiah! -- Halleluiah! -- Christ is Risen, indeed! Halleluiah! As the hymn writer offers us the scene [ELW#366:3] "The three sad days have quickly sped, Christ rises glorious from the dead… All glory to our risen head … Alleluia!" This third verse makes clear the challenges and the struggles we go through that connect to the three great days of the paschal mystery in the life of our Lord Jesus… and then again we are not left alone with them as that verse testifies. I am always greatly encouraged by the last verse of that hymn, **The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done**, which echoes the song of victory for our continued lives as an Easter people … "Lord, by the stripes which wounded you, from death's sting free your servants too, that we might live and sing to you. Alleluia!" The promise of new life springs forth in the power of the resurrection of Christ even from the darkest of days… that from Jesus' wounds we find healing and are given the ultimate gift in our salvation, freedom from sin, death and the devil. Yet as always, though we are given this gift of salvation freedom, the question always remains, what shall we do with it? Or – how shall we live it out in the ordinary of days?

As good and faithful stewards of all God's gifts, our Bellmore—Merrick congregational endeavor to bring two church communities together once again offers us a similar journey of transition as spring comes upon us. We are called to live in the light of the new life of Christ in, with and through each of us… as a new community filled with Easter promise and joy. The old has passed, the challenging days we still struggle with, but our struggles are never in vain. There are some among us, like those who first heard the news of the resurrection, that have become doubtful, tired of the journey and have fallen away out of sheer disillusionment. Some are trying to remain on the path, but at a safe distance out of fear and anxiety. And then there are others who, as an act of faith just "hang-in-there" as new growth reveals itself even ever so slowly.

We've established a new Mission Statement worked on by the members of both Bellmore and Merrick at our previous special retreat in connection with several goals to help us envision a future before us that involves our community. We hope to hear from a few more folks that attended the retreat offering a Temple Talk during worship soon… in the efforts to keep our members informed and alive with the spirit of Easter's promise of new life – even for our congregational efforts…to increase active and diverse participation. Why not think about helping your church councils out by filling out an ACTION PLAN as to how you might be able to share your gift, talents and other abilities to fulfill the mission goals of our new church. Forms can be found in the narthex – feel free to take one and submit it to pastor or any council member. In this and every way, we avail ourselves to live in the freedom of our savior Christ and share it with others.

Easter blessings in the risen Christ! ✠ Pastor Kirschbaum

Saint John's Lutheran Church of Bellmore & Merrick

Welcome to Worship – Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

2150 Centre Avenue, Bellmore, NY 11710
Office – 516-785-4331
Email – stjbellmore@gmail.com
Website – saintjohnbellmore.org

1 Van Roo Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566
Office/Fax – 516-379-3858/3681
ECC Office – 516-378-4ECC (4322)
Email – stjmerrick@gmail.com
Website – stjohnsmerrick.org

Mission Statement: **The mission of Saint John's Lutheran Church of Bellmore-Merrick, a nurturing community, is to live the way Jesus taught us by spreading the message of His unconditional love through joyful acceptance because we are all God's children.**

By 2031, Saint John's Lutheran Church of Bellmore- Merrick will…

✠ develop a comprehensive youth program
✠ increase active and diverse participation
✠ increase and improve our outreach programs
✠ broaden our social media activity

Congregational Council

President: Craig Medico
Vice President: Nina Thilesen
Secretary: Margaret Neverka
Recording Secretary: Karen Brucia
Co-Treasurers: Charlene Drews/Ira Bergman

Jerilyn Hunsinger
Nancy Kamps - Cook
Jennifer Pagano
Craig Preattle
Christa Tuccillo
Lori Vanderwaren

President: Heidi Kohler
Vice President: Barbara Entenza
Secretary: Dawn Kohler
Treasurer: Ken Glupe

Michael Chin
Gerry Finck
Barbara Kohler
Lisa Reisner
Marge Scarangella

Church Staff

The Reverend Perry J. Kirschbaum, Pastor
Ms. Charlene Drewes, Deacon
Mrs. Anita Fiedel, Church Admin. Assistant
Ms. Quinn Anderson, Organist
Ms. Deborah Stanczuk, ECC Director
Mrs. Bernadette Murray, ECC Admin.Assistant

Early Childhood Center Teachers

Ms. Michelle Alessi
Ms. Daisy Galan
Ms. Christina Kublo
Ms. Lisa Luchsinger
Ms. Mikalah Perrotta
Ms. Lisa Zachar
Ms. Sharon Loscalzo

Online Worship

Worship will be live streamed on the St. John's Merrick Facebook page on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. and shared to the Saint John Bellmore Facebook page.

https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsmerrick/
https://www.facebook.com/saintjohnbellmore

Worship Server Schedule

	Assisting Minister	Acolyte	Usher	Lector	Altar Guild
5/3	Charlene	Logan	Annamarie/Ken	Charlene	Carol/Christa
5/10	Gail	Ashlynn	Barbara K/Craig	Gail	Marge/Nancy D
5/17	Nancy	Zachary	Nina/Makayla	Nancy	Carol/Lori
5/24	Charlene	Adrian	Jim/Nicholas	Kathy G	Marge/Barbara E
5/31	Gerry	Makenzie	Margaret/Mike T	Dawn	Carol/Nina

May Birthdays

Jennifer Bergman	May 1st
Kevin Ziminski	May 2nd
Hudson DiTuri	May 4th
Jennifer Pagano	May 8th
Corey Bogen	May 12th
Nicole Pagano	May 22nd

If you would like to add your name to the birthday list, please contact the church office.

Altar Flowers

The Altar Flower Calendar is hanging on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Select a Sunday to offer a gift of flowers to be given In Honor of or In Memory of … a loved one or a special occasion. A contribution of **$30** is requested for each single-face floral arrangement. Please fill out an Altar Flower envelope found in any pew rack and place it into the offering plate. The same information can also be mailed to the church office with a check at least 2 weeks in advance of the date you choose.

Food Pantry

If you would like to help out with the Pantry, our most needed items at this time are:
Dish soap, syrup, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, jello, mac & cheese, stew, salad dressing, mayo, mustard, ketchup, cooking oil. NO green beans, peas or salmon please – we have plenty.

Merrick Campus Annual Congregational Meeting

Join us for our Annual Congregational Meeting on **Sunday, May 3,** following worship and coffee hour. We will be voting on new council members and a new mission 2026-27 budget for ministry. This is an important opportunity to come together as a church family, reflect on the past year, and look ahead to what's next. Your voice matters, and we hope to see you there! All members in good standing (attended regular worship, received communion of record and gave an offering of record within the current or preceding year) are encouraged to attend.

✞ In Our Prayers ✞

We lift in prayer our elected & lay leaders in both ecumenical and inter-faith relationships… for all associates in ministry, deacons, pastors and bishops, especially for: Yehiel Curry, our newly installed *ELCA Presiding Bishop;* Katrina Foster, *Synod Bishop-Elect of Metro New York soon to be consecrated and installed on November 22;* Christopher Vergara, *Synod VP* … for our Co-Deans: Pr. Sheridan & Pr. Hickey; along with the congregations of our Eastern Nassau Conference; for all congregations in transition and discernment… especially for our Bellmore/Merrick Collaborative – for the work of our B/M Transition Team; for the Huntington Collaborative with Pastor Cedarstrom now become United Lutheran Church of Long Island and Pr. Pollicino officially retiring…

For our E.C.C. Ministry; Deborah Stanzuk, E.C.C. Director; for our joint B/M Church Councils along with a dedicated host of volunteers; our Companion Synod [diocese] of Tanzania; for these United States of America; our current Administration and for help to combat racism, white privilege, prejudice, gun-violence, hatred and war… for Ukraine & Russia; the Middle East crisis; for all in need of healing; for those who faithfully serve in our Military and for our Police Officers; for yourself and your family that you might find strength of faith in good times as well as in times of trial… for all who continue to struggle with Long Covid and yet another surge of Covid variants, flu strains and RSV; for the vaccinated and the unvaccinated; all who have died…, for all teachers, parents, first responders, doctors, nurses, medical teams, scientists and all essential workers…

We lift in prayer the following servants of God who are in need of healing & wholeness during the month of…

April ~ 2026

Valentina Allesandra	Barbara Entenza	Doris Lomler	Fran Saperstein
Marilyn Anderson	Charlie Etherson	Linda Lown	Jonathon Scarduzio
Mike Annarelli	Doreen Etienne	Christina Maddalena	Baby Holland Schofield
Sam Barbella	Jenny Finck	Jane, Joseph & Steve Marrin	Freta Schubert
Jim Batcher	Ric Flanagan	Robert Martorella	Pat Schubert
Judy & Neil Bene	Chris Foley	Rev. John H. Matby	Marion Schurade
Ira & Jennifer Bergman	Ken Glupe	Carol McCrystal	Kathy Scott
Donna Boulder	Laura Hackel	Brian McLafferty	Connie Sestito
Joe Brucia	Barbara Haase	Dorothy Medico	Tom Smart
Karen Brucia	Kristen Hahn	Melissa & Nathaniel Milaccio	Jean Tatum
Lorraine Buck	Theresa Heenan	Makayla Mooney	Christ Thieme & Family
Joni Caggiano	Betsy Hirsch	Justin Nieves	Sal Vassallo
Amanda Caponi	Dolores Hohen	Bruce Oehler	Cliff Vooris
Pete Cappisillo	Marylou Hyland	Rosario Panzica	Pat Waring
Dona Caragol	Daniel Johnson	Marissa Paolercio	Arthur Wehrman
Irma Caragol	Karen Joyce	Sharon Parinello	Dorothy Williamson
Peg Crawley	Nancy Kamps-Cook	Anthony Politi	Margaret Wilson
Colin Deady	William R. Kamps	Maria Pusateri	Bobby, Charley & Erica Woell
Mark DeFilippis	Kevin Kilgallin	Ryan Ramapol	Yuan Zhang
Addalina DiTierri	Richard Knoll	Dana Roberts	Bruce Zimmerman
The Duncan Family	Hope Leys	Kathy Rollando	Michelle & Dan
Maria Ege	Sue Loheide	Joe Salow	

To include someone on our "Prayer List," please fill out a Prayer List Request Form printed on "blue" colored paper located on the information table in the narthex or you may call or email the church office. You can also call or email to let us know when someone can be taken off the list.

Social Ministry Committee

The Social Ministry Committee gathered at St. John's Merrick following the April Soup 2 Nuts/INN Cook, bringing together members to reflect on recent efforts and plan ahead. The group expressed appreciation to all who contributed their time and energy in preparing and serving the meal, as well as to Janice Eastlund and her supporters for their generous donation of turkeys and hams that will support upcoming meals. The meeting opened with prayer led by Lisa.

Discussion of pantry operations highlighted ongoing success in coordinating with Lutheran Social Services to redistribute excess or underused items, helping keep inventory fresh and useful. In return, the pantry received a substantial donation of peanut butter, which will support both pantry distribution and the Bag Lunch Ministry. The committee also welcomed Nancy Dineen as a new volunteer assisting with client orders and restocking. Members noted continued efforts to make good use of available ingredients, including incorporating pantry items like tomato sauce and canned salmon into future recipes.

The April cook featured a ham-themed meal with turkey tetrazzini, broccoli with cheese, and donated desserts. Looking ahead, the next cook is scheduled for May 16, with plans to serve ham with pineapple, green bean casserole, seasoned potatoes, applesauce, and cranberry sauce, while continuing to explore new menu ideas and balance preparation time with available resources. Discussion of financial practices and coordination between the two congregations was postponed due to time constraints but will be revisited, particularly regarding the use of funds and potential Thrivent grant opportunities.

Additional topics included early planning for the Spring Fair, where options such as a bounce house, face painting, and outdoor food stations are being considered, though logistics and staffing remain under review. The committee also continued developing its Social Ministry Action Plan, focusing on setting realistic goals for the coming year and strengthening collaboration between both congregations. A draft will be finalized and submitted for review in the near future.

Our Pastoral Care Ministry

PLEASE REMEMBER TO INFORM YOUR CHURCH with information you might have of any hospital admissions or emergencies. We can assist the *Pastoral Care Ministry* of our parish by keeping the church office up to date with what is going on in our lives as part of God's family...for example**...**

- You are in need of prayer.
- You are ill or hospitalized.
- A baby is born into your family.
- A family member has died.
- Funeral Arrangements need to be planned.
- You are making plans for your Marriage.
- You wish to receive Holy Communion.
- You are moving/transferring to a new Parish.
- You or someone you know should be on our Prayer List - OR - you or someone you know has now recovered and the list can gladly be updated.

<u>The Holy Communion</u> *(in special circumstances);* the <u>Anointing of the Sick</u> for healing and wholeness are both available for all who desire. <u>Blessing of a Dwelling</u> is also available for all who have moved into a new living space *(i.e., new apartment or house)* and seek God's blessing. Be open to the gracious gifts of God in the power of the Holy Spirit received in Living Faith.

St. John's Early Childhood Center Ministry

April ~ 2026

Dear Friends,

April brings another fun-filled month to St. John's Early Childhood Center! We wrapped up March with our class Easter celebrations. Our adorable little bunnies—complete with ears and cotton tails—performed for their parents before hopping over to the Prayer Garden for an exciting Easter egg hunt. The children were delighted as they filled their baskets with treats, and our joyful message rang true: "Jesus makes us so 'hoppy'!" Together, we celebrate the good news of His resurrection.

In addition, the students of the ECC joined the church Sunday School children and families for a special Holy Week retelling of the Easter story using Resurrection Eggs. The children enjoyed hands-on crafts and even baked resurrection cookies together. It was especially meaningful to see their excitement and wonder as they discovered the final egg was empty—just like the tomb. This event was followed by an Easter Egg Hunt and photos with the Easter Bunny on Saturday, April 4th. The students had so much fun participating, and the excitement of seeing the Easter Bunny truly made everyone's day.

Our Spring Plant Sale Fundraiser is in full swing this month in partnership with Jamesport Greenhouse. Jamesport Greenhouses offers a selection of flower flats, hanging baskets, pots, vegetable cells and more. Orders will be accepted through April 17, with flowers arriving at the school on Wednesday, April 29—just in time for Mother's Day! We hope you consider participating in this fundraiser for your spring planting and Mother's Day shopping needs.

In the classrooms, we are embracing all things spring—new life, plants, animals, and insects. The children will plant seeds, observe caterpillars transform into butterflies, and explore the many changes happening in the world around them. Our color of the month is purple, and we will also focus on the oval shape. Teachers have planned many engaging and creative activities to bring these lessons to life.

Looking ahead, we are excited for our Annual Art Show on Thursday, April 23 from 5:30–7:00 PM. Each of our young artists will have a special display space featuring their artwork from throughout the year. The evening will also include art pieces for sale, raffles for themed baskets, and the chance to stroll through our very own "Art Gallery." Admission is $10 for adults, and children are free. We warmly welcome all school and church families and hope you can join us for this special event!

Regards,

Deborah Stanczuk

Deborah Stanczuk, Director
Phone: (516) 378-4322
E-mail: ecc@stjohnsmerrick.org
Website: www.stjohnsmerrick.org

St. John's Lutheran Church

EARTH DAY

Celebrate Earth Day with us by decorating a small planter and planting a seedling that will grow into a beautiful flower, perfect for gifting to someone special this Mother's day!

SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH

11:00 AM

$5 DONATION REQUESTED TO OFFSET THE COST OF SUPPLIES

St. John's Lutheran Church

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 25th

11:00

Celebrate Earth Day with us in a fun and meaningful way! Children will decorate their own planter and plant a seedling that will grow into a beautiful flower, perfect for gifting to a special woman they love on Mother's Day. Each child will receive guidance as they create their special gift. All families are welcome to join us for worship on Sunday, May 10th for Mother's Day.

Light refreshments will be provided at this event.

A suggested donation of $5 is requested to offset the cost of the vendor and supplies. Please send back the tear-off to sign up by Friday, April 17th.

My child/children, _____ will attend the Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 25th at 11:00 AM.
Number of planters: _____
I am enclosing a $5 donation to help offset the cost.
_____ cash _____ check
_____ Zelle (stjmerrick@gmail.com)

ONE DAY. ONE ISLAND.
THOUSANDS OF PLATES TO FILL.

JOIN US **SATURDAY, MAY 9**

TO **END HUNGER** ON LONG ISLAND!

Just leave **non-perishable food items by your mailbox**—
your letter carrier will collect it for Island Harvest!

Suggested ***Donations:***

Canned goods, pasta, rice, nut butters,
toiletries and household products

LEARN MORE
& DONATE

BENEFITTING

ISLAND HARVEST
FEEDING AMERICA
Nourishing Long Island's Future

PRESENTED BY

nationalgrid

Ending hunger on Long Island with National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 6000

Saint John's Lutheran Church
of Bellmore - Merrick
Merrick Ave. & Margaret Blvd.
516-379-3858

Saturday, June 6

10am - 4pm

Many unique crafts to brighten your home or give as gifts.

Bounce house for children to enjoy as well as popcorn and cotton candy.

Rain or Shine!

Please contact Lisa at reisnercpa@aol.com for more information

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